

As I say, on February 24, the Governor proclaimed this state of emergency. He cited 24 critical erosion sites. That has been changed to 29 because of ongoing erosions due to the current high water level.

Today, there are 400 people from Sacramento who were worried enough about it that they have come to the Capitol to lobby for these funds. The money can become available as soon as the President signs the bill and certifies the contingent emergency.

The Sacramento River Bank Protection Project is the Federal project that repairs these critical erosion sites. This additional funding will ensure that these sites are repaired in this construction season. Both the State, Senator BOXER, and I have looked very carefully: Is this money that could be used this fiscal year, before the end of September, on these sites? The answer is clearly, yes.

Today, President Bush announced he is expediting environmental review to allow construction work on the sites to proceed as quickly as possible.

So President Bush, Governor Schwarzenegger, and the Senate Appropriations Committee all recognize how important it is to repair the weakened levees along the Sacramento River.

Mr. President, 174 actively eroding sites on levee banks have been identified. The highest priority is 29 of these sites. That is what we are trying to repair as soon as possible to prevent subdivisions, such as this one shown in this picture, from being inundated with 20 feet of water.

I stood there. I saw it. I saw the difference in height. And that is a phenomenon on the levee. Some might say housing should have never been built there, but the fact is it was.

The critical sites we are asking money for stretch along 137 miles of the Sacramento River. They include areas of the river in the city of Sacramento, and that is this pocket area.

Now, these homes sit virtually in the shadow of the levee system, and modeling by Sacramento show that a breached levee would result in the area flooding to depths of 17 to 20 feet.

This area is called the "Pocket" because the homes sit in a pocket by a broad curve in the river.

Mr. President, 33,000 homes are here; 100,000 people live right here. Colonel Light, the commander of the Sacramento District of the Corps, has indicated to me, to Senator COCHRAN, to Senator BYRD, to Senator DOMENICI, to Senator REID, that this money can be utilized by the Corps now. The reason they cannot transfer funds is because prior legislation of this body and the other body prohibits the transfer of funds above a certain amount in a timely and effective manner.

The repairs consist largely of armor-ing the levees with rock. Of the 29 sites, repairs for 5 have been designed already, and the remainder will be designed in the next few months.

I do not need to tell you what a major flood would do. I do not need to

tell you that these rivers are at historic highs right now. And it is as the river begins to decline that they worry most because the fear is the water subsiding will take with it portions of this levee.

The work has to be done.

It is kind of interesting. I often tell a story of when I was mayor, and the director of Public Works came to me and said: Madam Mayor, I think if there was an earthquake, the rim of Candlestick Park would come down. And I thought: What is the likelihood of that? I said: How much does it cost? He told me. And then I thought: I now know this. I have an obligation to do something about it. We found the money. We repaired the rim. And who would have thought that the Giants would have been in the second game of the World Series, at 5 o'clock, when the Loma Prieta earthquake hit, and the rim of Candlestick Park—had it come down—would have killed 20,000 people sitting directly below it.

I am telling you that these levee banks could breach. I am telling you that 100,000 people and 33,000 homes—as shown right here—could lose their lives and their homes. And the evacuation difficulty is enormous.

It seems to me that once we know this as public officials, we have an absolute obligation to do something about it.

The Appropriations Committee has agreed. The money can be used this fiscal year. And both my colleague and I believe very strongly we should vote "no" on this amendment.

I would like to yield the floor to my colleague. I know she is here somewhere.

Mr. COBURN. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. I certainly will.

Mr. COBURN. When you were changing Candlestick Park, you did not borrow money from future generations of Americans to do that? You found it within the budget? I believe that is correct; is it not?

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Well, it is interesting. City and county budgets have to be balanced. The only budgets that do not have to be balanced are the State budget, at least in California, and the Federal budget. But we had to balance our budget, so, yes, I did have to find the money by taking it from other places. That is true.

Mr. COBURN. Will the Senator yield for an additional question?

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. I will.

Mr. COBURN. I have said I do not deny this work needs to be done. Can you foresee that the environmental impact assessments for all this will be completed in time for this money to be used this fiscal year?

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Yes. Because I am told the declaration of emergency by the State and the contingent emergency by the President, which he said he would declare this morning, effectively clears that for this particular work on these particular high-priority sites.

Mr. COBURN. Will the Senator yield for one additional question?

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Yes, I will.

Mr. COBURN. Does it concern you at all that over the 46 years of this project the engineering by the Corps of Engineers for these levees is requiring them to go back now, in 29 places, and fix what they should have done right the first time? Does that concern you at all?

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Well, of course it does. Of course it concerns me. But we learn in this business. And I think Katrina was a big learning lesson for all of us. And we have not done right by our infrastructure.

One of the problems is, as we have to cut discretionary spending that is non-defense, not entitlements, the only thing we are cutting—we are cutting 18 percent of what we spend every year. These are Federal levees. They are owned by the Federal Government. There is a responsibility to protect the people behind them.

Mr. COBURN. Will the Senator yield for one additional question?

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Of course.

Mr. COBURN. Would it make sense to you that we could, in a supplemental, change the authorization under the emergency process so that the Sacramento Corps could use their \$13.5 million they are going to have in unobligated balances at the end of this year? We could do that just as well as borrow an additional \$10.9 million against our children; could we not?

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Well, I have not looked at this. I was at the Napa River, where we have a big flood project, and there is a problem there. The corps there told me they could not transfer funds above a certain amount. And I believe there was some provision in a prior supplemental to prevent the transferring of that money.

Let me say this to the Senator. Do I believe this is a life emergency? Yes. Do I believe that any day these 100,000 people and 33,000 homes could be flooded? Yes. Why? Because I know they are 20 feet below the water level. I know the water level is the highest it has ever been. I know the levees are eroded. I know what they call "boils" are popping up all over.

I know it could happen. And when it happens, it happens so fast because there is so much water. So because I know it, and now you know it, we have an obligation to do something about it. And that is what the Government is here for: to save lives in the event of an emergency.

We also know that earthquake probabilities are way up, and this could be devastating. So this work has to be done. We are asking for money in the Energy and Water bill. We will have additional money there. We are going through the regular channels. But this high priority work should be done now. And we should get the money there as fast as we possibly can.

It could happen tomorrow, it could happen the next day, the next week. I